

# Cape Breton Highlands National Park

NOVA SCOTIA

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## Cape Breton Highlands National Park

### LOCATION

Cape Breton Highlands National Park is situated in the northern portion of Cape Breton Island. Lying between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it follows part of a great table-land that rises to an altitude of over 1,700 feet above the surrounding seas. Set apart as a National Park in 1936, its 367 square miles of rugged natural landscape is reminiscent of the coastal areas of Scotland.

The detailed map in this folder has been prepared especially to assist visitors to readily identify the various features of the Park.

### PURPOSE

Cape Breton Highlands National Park is one of Canada's 18 National Parks which form a chain of nature sanctuaries extending from Mount Revelstoke in British Columbia to Terra Nova in Newfoundland. These Parks have been established for the preservation of selected areas in their natural state for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians.

This vast area of more than 29,000 square miles is administered by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

### NATURAL FEATURES

#### GEOLOGICAL

The surface of Cape Breton consists of a high upland with fringes of a much lower coastal plain in some places. The upland is a northeastward extension of an old land surface found in parts of New England, the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and the Maritimes to the West. The plateau of western Newfoundland is probably part of this same upland.



These tide-washed cliffs provide evidence of geological history.

The highest point in the Park, and indeed in Nova Scotia, is about 7 miles west of Ingonish at an altitude of 1,747 feet. Most of the rest of the upland lies at maximum heights of 1,500 to 1,600 feet. Spectacular cliffs about 1,000 feet high are formed along the western shore where the plateau comes almost directly to the sea. The eastern side is more gently sloping, although a long east-facing scarp is formed along a great fault, or break in the earth's crust which extends along the valley of the North River and northward beyond it.

The plateau area has been deeply cut into by streams in fairly recent geological times. The Cheticamp River, for example, in the southwestern corner of the Park has cut a valley which is as much as a thousand feet below the plateau level. The Grande Anse River, in the northwest corner of the Park, has cut a deep valley

along which the main road climbs to the upper levels. The cutting of such valleys along the sides of the upland has produced the beautiful, steep but rounded hills which, with their forest cover, make the valley areas so beautiful.

The rock history of the Park extends back into the past for a billion years. Sedimentary materials such as sand, limy mud, and gravel collected on the bottom of an ancient sea and finally solidified to form solid rock. Some time later masses of molten igneous material invaded and altered the ancient sediments while they themselves crystallized to form granite and other such rocks. A long time later, perhaps 300 million years ago, there began another chapter of sedimentation of which we have record in the Park. This time sedimentary materials collected in shallow marine areas, estuaries and river deltas to form conglomerate, sandstone, and shale. A little later the sea changed and sometimes parts of it were cut off and evaporated leaving behind reddish beds with gypsum deposits.

Masses of granite were intruded during folding and faulting which affected the whole of this part of North America, at least once and perhaps several different times, during the last 500 million years. Now we find the sedimentary rocks standing up on edge in some places and the older ones are cut by various large and small masses of rock which at one time were molten.

What is now Cape Breton stood stable for a very long time. Over the course of millions of years, rivers eroded the land until the whole area was reduced to a flat plain close to sea-level. In comparatively recent geological time the whole mass was uplifted and the low plain became a plateau. Rivers cut deep valleys into it and the sea washed its margins.

During the last million years the whole area was covered with a great icecap that covered all of northern North America in much the same way as ice now covers Antarctica. Soils were scraped away, great boulders torn away from

the solid rock and left on the landscape, and masses of rock rubble piled over the land. Now, 10,000 years after the ice has left, masses of glacial debris and stranded boulders are to be seen everywhere, the streams are back eroding the land, and the complicated rocks which took a thousand million years to form are there for us to see.

### PLANT LIFE

The seascans with their bold headlands, the numerous streams with their deep channels, and the treeless interior barrens give a large number of habitats in which many diverse communities of plants grow. The small ponds and lakes of freshwater and the indentations of seawater along the coasts add further to the diversification of the plant communities and the plants in them.

The Park is covered with a typical Acadian Forest made up of balsam fir, white spruce, black spruce, red spruce, white birch, yellow birch, sugar maple, white elm, beech, balsam poplar, aspen poplar, red oak, and a few other trees. The evergreen trees predominate at the higher elevations but in the high plateau, making up the central portion of the Park, much of the area is devoid of trees. This interior region is one of the most interesting parts of the Park but one not generally seen by its visitors. Here are unique areas of muskeg, small ponds and lakes,



Common mures and their young.

and broad areas of drier heath-barrens, in which reindeer lichens, Labrador tea, and many other extremely interesting plants grow.

The aspect of the countryside and the plants and animals living here are, in many respects, like those of Labrador or other sub-arctic areas. They are well worth a visit.

Both in the interior heath bogs and along the seacoast headlands the spruce and other trees are stunted and twisted into bizarre shapes. The headlands are the home too for such interesting plants as creeping juniper, ground juniper, black crowberry, and Scotch lovage, which are able to live in spite of the winds and salt spray.

The variety of broad-leaved trees, and especially of the sugar maple, growing side by side with the coniferous evergreen trees gives a wonderful display of autumn colours in the Park.

### WILDLIFE

The Park is a wildlife sanctuary and all animals are protected against hunting or trapping. Many of the animals have become accustomed to man and may be observed at close



Black Brook Cove—a typical seascape from the Cabot Trail.

range. They are still wild, however, and should be viewed and photographed with caution.

Mammals characteristic of the Park are: white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, lynx, beaver, red fox, bob cat, muskrat, weasel, marten, otter, mink, chipmunk, snowshoe hare, red squirrel and flying squirrel.

### BIRDLIFE

About 180 kinds of birds have been recorded from the Park. It is a good observation area for seabirds. Sooty shearwater, Leach's petrel and gannet are seen from time to time. The seacoast dwellers, such as the razorbill, black guillemot, common puffin, common murre, and common raven may also be found.

Ducks and geese are prominent during migration and some ducks like black duck, ring-necked duck, common goldeneye, common eider, and red-breasted merganser breed in the Park.

Spruce grouse, ruffed grouse, and the introduced ring-necked pheasant are commonly found while some of the shore birds breeding in the Park are American woodcock, common snipe, spotted sandpiper, and willet.

Gulls and terns are well represented and Bonaparte's gull and Arctic tern are of special interest.

The red-tailed hawk, bald eagle, and osprey are frequently seen and all nest in the Park.

### FISH

Modern methods of fish management are followed and a regular program of stocking is carried on in the lakes and streams to maintain and improve this sport. Sea trout, lake and Eastern brook trout may be taken in most waters, and Atlantic salmon may be caught in the Cheticamp River pools. Deep sea fishing is an increasingly popular sport and local fishermen are willing to take visitors out for this purpose. Up-to-date information on fishing and the regulations can be obtained at the Park Information Centres or from any Park Warden.



White-tailed deer thrive in this sanctuary.

### HOW YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PARK

Detailed information about the Park is available at the Park Information Centres located at the eastern entrance at Ingonish and western entrance at Cheticamp, or from any of the Park Wardens. Two self-guiding, well marked nature trails have been established near the Park Office.

### HOW TO SEE THE INTERESTING FEATURES

The most interesting features may be seen conveniently from the Cabot Trail, and viewpoints for this purpose have been established at selected locations. The Cabot Trail passes through or near some small villages bordering the Park boundary where the main industries are fishing and handcrafting. Short drives into Warren Lake and the Mary Ann Falls are recommended. Other trails to the interior are primitive, not suited for motoring, and not recommended for general use.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### PARK ADMINISTRATION

A resident Superintendent is in charge of the Park. The protection of the Park and the visitor is in the hands of the Warden Service assisted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Chief Warden and five District Wardens are available at all times to assist and advise visitors.

#### SEASON

The Park is open throughout the year, but it is only from May to October that all facilities are available for visitors. During the winter months service stations and stores in the nearby villages are open and limited accommodation is available.

#### CAMPING

The various campgrounds and picnic areas are indicated on the accompanying map. There is a serviced campground at Ingonish, another serviced campground and trailer area at Cheticamp, and smaller campgrounds with lesser facilities at Black Brook, Big Intervale, Grande Anse, and Corney Brook. The serviced campgrounds contain kitchen shelters, washroom facilities with showers, and laundry facilities. The semi-serviced campgrounds provide shelters, fireplaces, and sanitary facilities.

Picnic areas with tables and fireplaces are provided at various points as indicated. These picnic sites have firewood, water and sanitary facilities.

#### PRESERVATION

National Parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them in their natural state. For this reason all birds, animals, wildlife, trees, rocks

and fossils are to remain undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they are to be left for others to enjoy. Feeding, touching, or molesting wild animals is not permitted. This is in the interests of the animal, as well as the human who could receive serious injury.

Please help protect your own Park for future enjoyment. It is part of your national inheritance.

#### PREVENT FIRE

Campfires may be kindled only in fireplaces provided for this purpose and must be completely extinguished before campers leave the site. Visitors observing an unattended fire should attempt to extinguish it, if possible, and promptly report it to the nearest Park employee. Fire in a National Park can cause damage which cannot be repaired in a hundred years.

#### PETS

Dogs and cats may accompany visitors into the Park. For the protection of Park animals however, dogs must be kept on leash.



Cape Smoky dominates South Ingonish Bay.



# CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK NOVA SCOTIA

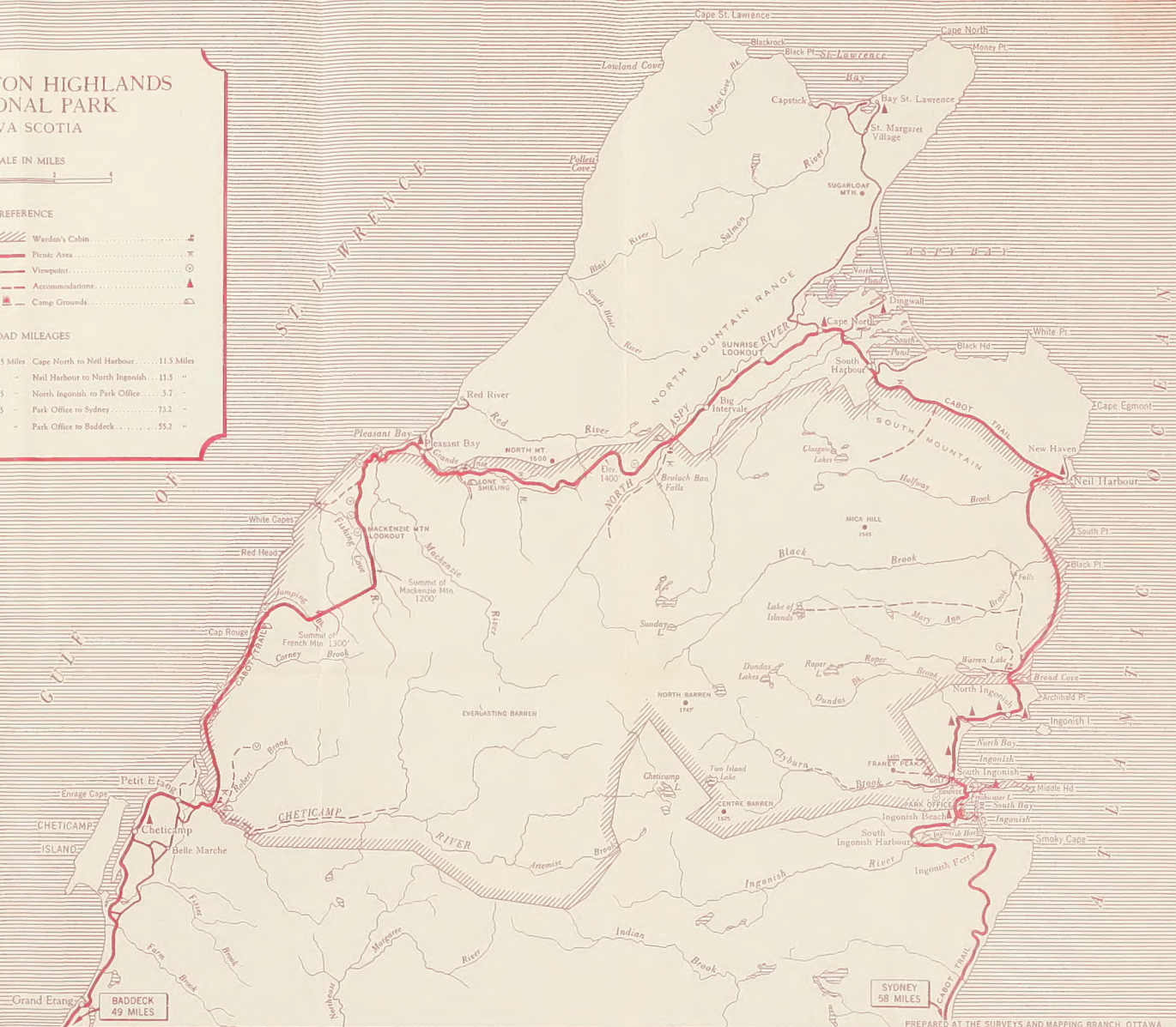


## REFERENCE

Park Boundary	Warden's Cabin
Highway	Picnic Area
Secondary Road	Viewpoint
Trail	Accommodations
Nature Trail	Camp Grounds

## ROAD MILEAGES

Baddeck to Margaree Forks	32.5 Miles	Cape North to Neil Harbour	11.5 Miles
Margaree Forks to Cheticamp	25	Neil Harbour to North Ingonish	11.5
Cheticamp to Pleasant Bay	24.5	North Ingonish to Park Office	5.7
Pleasant Bay to Cape North	19.5	Park Office to Sydney	73.2
Cape North to Bay St. Lawrence	12	Park Office to Baddeck	55.2



PREPARED AT THE SURVEYS AND MAPPING BRANCH, OTTAWA

## HOW TO REACH THE PARK

Most visitors motor to Cape Breton Highlands National Park. Cape Breton is an Island joined to mainland Nova Scotia by the Canso Causeway located on the Trans-Canada Highway at Port Hawkesbury. From this point Highway 19 leads north to intersect with the Cabot Trail at Margaree Forks. From Margaree Forks the Cabot Trail leads north to the western park entrance near Cheticamp and continues around the Park to Ingonish. From Port Hawkesbury Highway 5 leads to Baddeck and onto the Cabot Trail to Ingonish. The Canadian National Railways and Trans-Canada Air Lines provide service to Sydney. During the summer there is good bus service from Sydney to the Park, and on Tuesdays and Fridays the M.S. Aspey leaves Sydney

for Ingonish and can carry a small number of passengers. The return trips are made on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARK

The Park derives its name primarily because of its location, but also because the terrain is similar to the highlands of Scotland. Many of the original settlers on the Island came from Scotland and their descendants maintain ties with the homeland, even to the extent of "having the Gaelic", although mostly the older people converse in this language today. In order to provide land for the National Park the provincial government expropriated property which had been owned by these people from early in the 18th century. Descendants of these original settlers still dwell in the small fishing villages

on the borders of the Park and in many cases continue handicrafts by the same methods used generations ago.

The Cabot Trail was named after John Cabot who, it is claimed, made his first landfall in 1497, in northern Cape Breton Island. A cairn marking this location was erected in 1958. The Park and indeed the entire Island is rich in history as well as providing for full enjoyment of the scenic wonders.

## ACCOMMODATION

A variety of accommodation is offered in the Park, details of which are available at the Park Office. No reservations or arrangements for accommodation are made by park staff.

Although the Park has been set apart primarily to preserve its natural features for the

enjoyment of the present and future generations, the Parks Branch has developed the natural beaches for swimming and has provided an 18-hole golf links, tennis courts, bowling green and playgrounds. The customary services of a modern community are provided in the nearby villages.

Persons wishing additional information concerning the Park may address their inquiries to:

The Superintendent,  
Cape Breton Highlands National Park,  
Ingonish Beach, Nova Scotia.

or

Natural and Historic Resources Branch,  
Department of Northern Affairs  
and National Resources,  
Ottawa, Canada.

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